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recruitment and training of North Korean Air Force personnel

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Maintenance and training of NK Air Force personnel

The officers and men in the NK Air Force were recruited from among the following persons on plan:

- 1) Graduates of air force and infantry military officers' schools.
- 2) Persons who were enlisted into the North Korea People's Army (NKPA) as volunteers in formality, and later assigned as non-commissioned officers and privates in the air force.
- 3) Female nurses who volunteered for the service.
- 4) Military surgeons who graduated from medical colleges.

The officers below major were described by their military rank such as lieutenant or junior lieutenant without mentioning air force or army. But generals were described with the name of the branch of the Armed Forces they served. For example, Major General, Air Force. Moreover, no signs of special skill were instituted for the NK air force personnel, but they were designated according to the kind of service as follows: Aviator (pilot), ordinary officer or technical officer (maintenance officer). The non-commissioned officers and privates were called by their ranks.

1. Enrollment (Qualifications for application and transfer):

- a. Military officers' school: When the graduation ceremony was approaching, the enrollment announcement was made without mentioning the air force military school. The enrollment was made at irregular periods different from other branches of the NKPA and always in secret. The flying course and the maintenance course in the military officers' school admitted applicants separately and gave graduation diplomas also at different periods. There were two methods of enrollment: Admit selected servicemen in the NK Air Force (to fill vacancies in the maintenance course, and admit civilians (to fill vacancies in the flying course), the periods of enrollment and admission being different.

1) Method of admission of selected servicemen in NK Air Force:

Before the entrance examinations the Air Force Headquarters notifies the units under its command of the number of persons who will take the examinations and then the regiment commanders nominate and recommend the examinees to the Air Force Headquarters, which serves another notification with approval of the recommendations. Then the candidates are sent to the air base hospitals of the proper units to receive physical examinations and the results of the same examinations are reported to the Air Force Headquarters where the decision for admission is made on the basis of the physical examinations. The

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selected servicemen cadets in the air force are admitted to the maintenance course and none of them are assigned to the flying course.

there was a plan to enroll the cadets of the military school from among the servicemen in the air force but the applicants for the pilot course came from the civilian students.

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by order of the Air Force Command a physical examination was being conducted with the applicants for the air force military officers' school. The air force personnel on the active list who were recommended by the unit commanders were as follows: soldiers in the maintenance service and some soldiers from platoons in guard duty, who had served more than one year in the army, and from among undergraduates of high schools, after checking their family backgrounds to see whether any of their family members had gone to the NOK and whether their family condition was good during the Japanese occupation.

- 2) Method of admission of civilian applicants: The pilots of the NK Air Force were solely trained in the flying course of the military officers' school, where the cadets were found to be undergraduates from high schools and colleges. Many of the applicants were disqualified as a result of strict physical examinations, and there were few men on active service who were physically qualified. Therefore, it was thought that much difficulty is being experienced in enrolling the cadets from the servicemen. According to the regulations, NKPA, the cadets of the military school should be selected from among the soldiers on the active list, but this rule does not apply to the cadets of the flying course in the air force military officers' school.

- b. Ordinary officers: In the NK Air Force personnel were designated as ordinary officers except pilots, navigators, gunners and the technical staff engaged in the maintenance of aircraft. The method of recruitment of these officers was as follows: Recruiting graduates of the infantry military officers' school (KANG Kon, KIM Ch'aek, and the Artillery), graduates of Army surgeon military officers' school, other officers of the ground force, and graduates of civilian medical colleges.

- 1) Graduates of infantry military officers' school: According to the recruitment plans of the staff bureau, Ministry of National Defense, the newly commissioned junior lieutenants who graduate from the KANG Kon, KIM Ch'aek, and the Artillery Military Officers' schools, under the management of the Ministry of National Defense, were assigned to the various army groups of the ground force, the air force, and the navy. The assignments to the air force were made early each year but the number of officers assigned was unknown. In certain years no assignments were made

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All the officers were distributed to the rear and to administrative fields while the graduates of the KIM Ch'ak Military Officers' School were sent to the political field. The officers in the field of security were appointed from among personnel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [redacted] but their personal status were changed to active servicemen under the Ministry of National Defense. 50X1-HUM

- 2) Graduates of army surgeon military officers' school: These were ordinary surgeons (non-air navigation surgeons). Judging from the assignments of civilian medical school graduates it was thought that the graduates of the army surgeon military school were inadequate to fill the posts in the airforce. The method of assignment was same as 1), above, and some were stationed in the air base hospitals.
- 3) Graduates of civilian medical colleges: These were called by the WPA upon graduation and were assigned to the air force. In other words, the graduates of a five-year medical college were called by the army and were commissioned as junior lieutenants and assigned to the air force as surgeons. Half of the surgeons in the hospital at Wonsan Air Field were this type of graduate and the remaining half were graduates of the army surgeon military officers' school. The surgeons in the P'yongyang Air Base Hospital were mostly the former type of graduate. Judging from the fact that these graduates were not given any basic military training, it was thought that they were given a proscribed training after the recruitment and assigned to proper posts as commissioned surgeons as was witnessed in the various units of the air force, including the unit at the Wonsan Air Field. The air navigation surgeons were captains or majors above the age of 30. They were enlisted during the Korean War from among the graduates of medical colleges, and were rich with experience in the medical field.
- 4) Officers in service of ground force: The officers in the political field of the infantry were transferred to the air force. They were mostly captains or higher ranking officers and, in the case of the Wonsan Air Field, they were transferred to the same field on three or four occasions. There were some political officers in the navy who were transferred to the air force, but it was very rare. 50X1-HUM

[redacted]

There were no female officers in the NK Air Force. [redacted] aviatresses mingled with male aviators but on grounds of their being

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detrimental to the public decency they were discharged from active service together with the female nurses. The nursing officers were junior lieutenants but following the change in the tables of organization they were lowered to senior sergeants.

c. Recruitment of non-commissioned officers and privates in NK Air Force:

A portion of the soldiers who responded to the so-called "calling program" of the Ministry of National Defense were assigned to the air force in accordance with the recruitment plan of that ministry. The "calling program" is the business of enlistment of soldiers by the NKPA. Although the recruits were called "volunteers" as a matter of formality, an atmosphere and environment was created by the NK authorities through various political meetings and organizations in such a way that the youths in the age of military service were obliged to apply for enlistment. The new recruits were enrolled simply as soldiers of the NKPA, and then they were assigned to the air force, the navy and the ground force by plans of the Ministry of National Defense. There were no other methods of recruitment of the air force personnel of lower ranks than this "calling program."

d. Female soldiers in NK Air Force:

- 1) Nurses: These were enlisted from among the qualified applicants who graduated from civilian nurse training schools. They were called volunteers as a matter of formality, but most of the nurses made competition for admission due to the art of propaganda and agitation of the NK authorities. The enrolled nurses were given the same treatment due to NK air force soldiers in promotions and otherwise and were accommodated in soldiers' barracks.
- 2) Telephone & telegraph operators: All of the telephone and telegraph operators in the NK air force were female soldiers who were enrolled by the same method as the nurses mentioned above, regardless of qualifications prior to the enrollment.

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2. Education:

3.

- b. Maintenance officers: There were three methods of training maintenance officers as follows: Training technical officers during three years to complete the whole course of the air force military officers' school, training junior engineers during six months to complete the whole course of the non-commissioned officers' institute, attached to the air force military officers' school.

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[redacted] training maintenance officers in the field to complete the whole course of a training institute of new recruits. In addition, there was a supplementary education for officers in the field of maintenance conducted in the military officers' institute, attached to the military officers' school in the following manner: First, giving one year's theoretical supplementary education to maintenance officers who did not receive regular training during the Korean War; second, giving three years' education to selected maintenance officers in the capacity of junior engineers at an military officers' institute to train them as engineers to be responsible maintenance officers in flying battalions.

The following is an explanation of the three methods of technical training of maintenance officers:

- 1) The non-commissioned officers and privates who had been enrolled by the "calling program" and assigned to the air force were distributed to each unit by decision of the staff office, Air Force Command, and given basic education of new recruits by two methods: First, giving three months' education at the new recruits' training institute temporarily opened by order of the Division commander; second, giving on-the-spot education after direct assignment to each unit of the Division.

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But when a large number of people were assigned to the maintenance posts a new recruits' training institute was established to give new recruits' education to all non-commissioned officers. [redacted] 50X1-HUM

[redacted] maintenance officers being turned out to serve in the Sondok Air Field, where his Division headquarters was located, on two occasions. [redacted] most of the new recruits in the field of maintenance received three months' training on maintenance while the new recruits in the fields of administration, supply and guard duties were assigned to proper posts without receiving such basic training, so they received the training on the spot. The new recruits who completed the whole course of a training institute were assigned to maintenance posts. 50X1-HUM

- 2) Graduates of non-commissioned officers' institute: Some soldiers, who were assigned to the air force through the "calling program", were put into the non-commissioned officers' institute to receive a six months' regular training and were disposed to a flying regiment to serve a few months as maintenance officers, and then promoted to junior engineers. The NK Air Force recruited half of the maintenance officer from among the trainees of the new recruit institutes and the half from non-commissioned officers' institutes.

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- c. Other education: The NK Air Force gave regular education to its personnel in the field of flying and maintenance, and some non-commissioned officers and privates were given special skills on administration, supply and communications in their respective field of service, but no special education was given to officers, because they had already specialized in their field of study in the infantry military officers' school or the civilian surgeon military officers' school before entering the air force service. The basic education of the NKPA was given to new recruits, except those in the maintenance service, after their assignments to each post, and this education was conducted by the responsible officers in the places of service.

- d. Daily education and training of importance: The flying officers received air training and ground education, but here only the ground education is explained as follows: The subjects of study were: political indoctrination (to all officers), capacity of fighter planes, distinction of fighter planes, reading of maps. The education and training of greater importance given to officers and men of other branches of the Armed Forces were conducted in accordance with the training program of the Air Force Command.

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The subjects of study of special importance in the ground education of the flying officers and other officers were the emergency call training and the anti-Atomic training which are being conducted with more vehemence as the years go by. Thus, in the plan of anti-Atomic training

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all the families of the officers were also included, although no training of this kind was conducted. Apart from these two trainings there was a marked change in the form and contents of the political indoctrination. In other words the political indoctrination was given on two occasions each week, but it was conducted during four hours on each Saturday afternoon for all officers while the non-commissioned officers and privates were ordered to attend the political lectures for two hours each on two occasions each week as before. At the same time the following subjects of study were added to the indoctrination program for officers:

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History of Struggle of the Communist Party (former subject of study)
 Philosophy and Political Economy (new subjects of study)
 Reference materials of political lessons for non-commissioned officers (Former subject of study for non-commissioned officers, employing a pamphlet published by the Ministry of National Defense).

- e. Studying abroad by special skills: The NK army officers going abroad to study were handled by the Ministry of National Defense, and all the officers

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[redacted]

were sent to the Soviet Union. [redacted] an unknown number of NK Air Force officers in the fields of maintenance and operations (including pilots during time of war) were sent to the Soviet Union to study by special arrangements of the Ministry of National Defense, but this privilege of going abroad had since been suspended. [redacted] ti. 50X1-HUM
 crew (number unknown) of the IL-14, the airplane for the exclusive use of KIM Il-sung, were sent to the Soviet Union to study [redacted] 50X1-HUM

- f. Plan of new training for reinforcements of units: Unknown
- g. Training of Atomic War (CBR Warfare): Side by side with the emergency call training, the anti-Atomic training was conducted at least once a week in the following manner:
- 1) Taking-off of all mobile aircraft.
 - 2) Entering of all army personnel and their families into underground anti-Atomic shelters, taking the following items with them: Personal effects, including combat-bags, emergency knapsacks, and individual weapons; documents of each post; arms and ammunitions (including food at the air bases). 50X1-HUM

The anti-Atomic training was conducted once or twice a month [redacted] but it was increased to once or twice each week, because it is the most important subject of ground training. [redacted] 50X1-HUM

3. Dispositions:

- a. Non-commissioned officers and privates: The transfers of all non-commissioned officers and privates were handled by the Rank & File Department, Air Force Command, and their dispositions to the regiment by the Rank & File Section, Division headquarters, and their assignment to each post in the battalion, company, platoon, and squad were made by the Rank & File Section of the Regiment. Since there were no regulations governing the period of service of non-commissioned officers and privates, there were no regular replacements except a few transfers at the time of establishment of new units or for some other reasons. When a transfer was ordered, the experiences at the former post were always taken into consideration.
- b. Officers below deputy battalion commanders: These were ordered to proper posts in the name of the Air Force Command.
- c. Officers above battalion commanders: These were ordered to proper posts or transferred to new posts in the name of the Minister of National Defense. But, in reality, the Party committee in each unit above regiments

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made recommendations for assignments or transfers to the proper authorities to issue orders in writing, and therefore the power of disposition of officers was in the hands of the Party committee. However, the flying officers were not transferred so often, except in special cases, in order to maintain their fighting strengths in formation flights and to train them as highly skilled flyers.

A. Discharge from military service:

a. Officers: The officers were in military service for life as professional soldiers, and they were discharged only for one of the following reasons:

- 1) When the body is too weak to continue military service.
- 2) When they had entered the army with fraud.
- 3) When they were found to be unsound in ideology.

When an officer was discharged for physical handicaps, he was ordered to enter hospital at a recreation station under the management of the Ministry of Health or to work in an office according to the degrees of the handicaps, by decision of the staff bureau of the Cabinet. The discharges were made by written orders of the Minister of National Defense, who issued undisclosed certificates, for the outgoing officers to take to the staff bureau of the Cabinet, and the same bureau made the dispositions, mentioned above.

There were no formalities to be taken for registration of the discharges, but an army officer was always treated as a staff member in all walks of life in the outside societies. The officers who were discharged for their undesirable elements or reactionary thoughts were considered as a kind of political purge, and therefore, they were ordered to work as laborers immediately after the discharge.

b. Non-commissioned officers and privates: The non-commissioned officers and privates, who entered the military service after 1956, made pledges to serve three years in the army. Therefore, on expiration of this period they were automatically discharged. The above regulations governing the service of soldiers, NKPA, were applied to all soldiers in the army, navy, and the air force, provided that the non-commissioned officers of the NK air force in the field of maintenance had to serve four years under a special plan. The persons who entered the military service prior to 1956 had to remain in the same service indefinitely until they received an order of discharge.

The orders of discharge for all non-commissioned officers and privates were issued by the Air Force Commander, who also simultaneously issued certificates of discharge. Following the discharge, two kinds of dispositions were taken - either sending the outgoing soldier to his home area according

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[redacted]

to his own desire or assigning him to a workshop. But, under the present conditions, the farmers have fallen into a miserable life under excessive labor, and many farmers wish to leave their farms for good. For this reason, the farmers' sons did not want to return to their country homes, thus bringing an acute shortage of farm labor. So, the NK authorities made plans to send them to the farms in their native home areas. However [redacted] the same authorities followed the basic policy to send them home by their voluntary decisions.

The home-coming discharged soldiers appeared at the military mobilization department, where they produced their discharge certificates and received military certificates in exchange, and then they went to a new workshop designated by the county people's committees.

The discharged soldiers who returned to farms worked on farms as members of farm cooperatives, and those who returned to their homes in cities went to colleges as a rule, because, in view of surplus labor in cities, they had no hope of finding employment in cities, and they tried to enter colleges to evade the government disposition to send them to farms. The discharged soldiers who were given new workshops were unmarried persons, and they were disposed to various farm cooperatives.

- c. Female soldiers: The female soldiers were also subject to military service for three years as the male soldiers, but even before the expiration of this period, if the women attained the age of 24, they were discharged. According to the military regulations, the soldiers of the people's army, regardless of sex, were permitted to get married during their services, and if a female soldier became pregnant as a result of secret love she was not discharged to suffer hard labor up to the last minute of giving birth to the love-child, and in the meantime, she was severely reprimanded at political meetings for her secret act. Some of the discharged female soldiers got married soon after the discharge while many others went to workshops to make a living.
5. Reserve military strength: There were no independent reserve military strength solely composed of the discharged soldiers, but in parallel with the expansion of military preparedness for a second attack of the ROK, following the plan of the NK government, the "Red Guards" were the unique reserve military strength. The organization of this man-power was in a grand scale, and its training as a ground force was not inferior to that of regular soldiers.

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